

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



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LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.



Happy Hour
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Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Moments & Memories Jewelry
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Leadership of U.S. command in Latin America changes hands amid criticism of boat strikes

By JOSHUA GOODMAN

Associated Press

DORAL, Fla. (AP) — A U.S.

Navy admiral who oversees military operations in Latin America handed off command responsibilities Friday as scrutiny increases over the Trump administration's deadly strikes on alleged drug boats in the region.

Adm. Alvin Holsey has retired one year into a posting that typically lasts three to four years and transferred leadership duties to his top military deputy, Air Force Lt. Gen. Evan Pettus, during a ceremony at U.S. Southern Command headquarters near Miami.

In farewell remarks, Holsey did not mention the military operations or the reasons for his early retirement. But he urged his successor to uphold longstanding partnerships in the region by standing firmly behind the shared values of democracy and support for the rule of law. "To be a trusted partner, we must be credible, present and engaged," Holsey said. Holsey's shock retirement was announced by the Pentagon in October, over a month into the Trump administration's strikes on suspected drug boats in the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean that have killed at least 87



Gen. Dan Caine, center, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, looks on as Navy Adm. Alvin Holsey, right, shakes hands with Air Force Lt. Gen. Evan Pettus during a ceremony at U.S. Southern Command, Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, in Doral, Fla.

people. With the campaign facing growing scrutiny by Congress, Holsey briefed key lawmakers earlier this week.

Long-term replacement for Holsey hasn't yet been named

The ceremony Friday was more subdued than past retirements, held outdoors amid a small crowd of mostly Southern Command staff and without Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, because President Donald Trump has yet to nominate Holsey's re-

placement.

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made no mention of the military operations in Latin America as he thanked Holsey for his 37 years of service. Caine referred to Holsey as a "stoic" leader and "quiet professional" who always leads with his heart and head.

"It's never been about you, it's been about people, it's been about others," Caine said. "You've never said 'I' in all the conversations we've

Associated Press

had. You've always said 'we.' ... The impact you've had will last for a long time." Holsey is departing as Congress is scrutinizing the boat attacks, including one that killed two survivors clinging to the wreckage of an initial strike. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Hegseth and other top officials have given classified briefings on Capitol Hill this week.

Holsey also spoke this week to key lawmakers overseeing the U.S. military by classified video call. Sen. Jack

Reed, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said afterward that Holsey answered senators' questions but that "there are still many questions to be answered." Reed later added that Holsey did not give a reason for his retirement other than saying it was a personal decision.

Boat strike scrutiny increases

Experts in the rules of warfare, human rights groups and even some of Trump's allies in Congress have questioned the legality of the attacks on those accused of ferrying drugs. For decades, they were arrested at sea by the Coast Guard and brought to the U.S. for criminal prosecution. The 22 known strikes against alleged drug-smuggling vessels are being supported by a giant flotilla of U.S. warships, attack helicopters, thousands of troops and even the nation's most advanced aircraft carrier. Trump's Republican administration has defended its aggressive tactics, designating several drug cartels in Latin America as foreign terrorist organizations and declaring that the U.S. is in armed conflict with those criminal organizations, relying on a legal argument that gained traction after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. □

Treasury ratchets up investigations targeting Minnesota's Somali community for fraud

By FATIMA HUSSEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Treasury Department is



Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent speaks during an event on "Trump Accounts" for kids in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

targeting businesses that people use to wire money to family members abroad as the Trump administration ratchets up investigations into fraud within Minnesota's Somali community, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Friday. President Donald Trump has targeted the Somali diaspora in Minnesota with immigration enforcement actions and has made a series of disparaging comments about the community. He has said the state is "a hub of fraudulent money laundering activity," though there has been little evidence to support that

claim. The new action was prompted in part by a series of fraud cases, including a nonprofit called Feeding Our Future accused of stealing pandemic aid meant for school meals. Prosecutors have put the losses from that case at \$300 million.

Bessent has pointed to a report by conservative news outlet City Journal, which claimed that taxpayer dollars from defrauded government programs flowed to al-Shabab, an al-Qaida-linked militant group that controls parts of Somalia. The report cites unnamed sources and the allegations

have not been substantiated. Federal prosecutors have not charged any defendants with supporting terrorists.

On Friday, Bessent said on social media that the Treasury Department will soon issue an order requiring money wire services that people use to send money to Somalia to submit additional verification to Treasury. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, a Treasury arm that combats financial crimes like money laundering and terrorism financing, will be deployed to assist in the effort, Bessent said. □

Trump administration says sign language services 'intrude' on Trump's ability to control his image



An American Sign Language interpreter, right, signs as President Donald Trump arrives for the lighting of the National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, near the White House in Washington.

By **MEG KINNARD**
Associated Press

The Trump administration is arguing that requiring real-time American Sign Language interpretation of events like White House press briefings "would severely intrude on the President's prerogative to control the image he presents to the public," part of a lawsuit seeking to require the White House to provide the services.

Department of Justice attorneys haven't elaborated on how doing so might hamper the portrayal President Donald Trump seeks to present to the public. But overturning policies encompassing diversity, equity and inclusion have become a hallmark of his second administration, starting with his very first week back in the White House. The National Association for the Deaf sued the

Trump administration in May, arguing that the cessation of American Sign Language interpretation which the Biden administration had used regularly represented "denying hundreds of thousands of deaf Americans meaningful access to the White House's real-time communications on various issues of national and international import." The group also sued during Trump's first administration,

Associated Press

seeking ASL interpretation for briefings related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a June court filing opposing the association's request for a preliminary injunction, reported Thursday by Politico, attorneys for the Justice Department argued that being required to provide sign language interpretation for news conferences "would severely intrude on the President's prerogative to control the image he presents to the public," also writing that the president has "the prerogative to shape his Administration's image and messaging as he sees fit." Government attorneys also argued that it provides the hard of hearing or Deaf community with other ways to access the president's statements, like online transcripts of events, or closed captioning. The administration has also argued that it would be difficult to wrangle such services in the event that Trump spontaneously took questions from the press, rather than at a formal briefing. A White House spokesperson did not immediately comment Friday on the ongoing lawsuit or answer questions about the ad-

ministration's argument regarding the damage of interpretation services to Trump's "image." In their June filing, government attorneys questioned if other branches of government were being held to a similar standard if they didn't provide the same interpretative services as sought by the association. As home to Gallaudet University, the world's premier college for the deaf and hard of hearing, Washington likely has an ample pool of trained ASL interpreters into which the White House could tap. Mayor Muriel Bowser has made ASL interpretation a mainstay of her appearances, including a pair of interpreters who swap in and out. Last month, a federal judge rejected that and other objections from the government, issuing an order requiring the White House to provide American Sign Language interpreting for Trump and Leavitt's remarks in real time. The White House has appealed the ruling, and while the administration has begun providing American Sign Language interpreting at some events, there's disagreement over what services it has to supply. □

Justice Department sues 4 more states for access to detailed voter data

By **REBECCA BOONE**
Associated Press

The U.S. Justice Department is suing four more states as part of its effort to collect detailed voting data and other election information across the country. The department filed federal lawsuits against Colorado, Hawaii, Massachusetts and Nevada on Thursday for "failing to produce statewide voter registration lists upon request." So far, 18 states have been sued, along with Fulton County in Georgia, which was sued for records related to the 2020 election. The Trump administration

has characterized the lawsuits as part of an effort to ensure the security of elections, and the Justice Department says the states are violating federal law by refusing to provide the voter lists and information about ineligible voters. The lawsuits have raised concerns among some Democratic officials and others who question exactly how the data will be used, and whether the department will follow privacy laws to protect the information. Some of the data sought includes names, dates of birth, residential addresses, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security

numbers. "States have the statutory duty to preserve and protect their constituents from vote dilution," Assistant Attorney General Harmet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division said in a press release. "At this Department of Justice, we will not permit states to jeopardize the integrity and effectiveness of elections by refusing to abide by our federal elections laws. If states will not fulfill their duty to protect the integrity of the ballot, we will." Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold, a Democrat, said her office

declined to provide unredacted voter data. "We will not hand over

Coloradans' sensitive voting information to Donald Trump. □



A voter carries his ballot to a booth at a polling station, Nov. 4, 2025, in Lawrence, Mass.

Associated Press

Illinois becomes 12th state to provide medical aid in dying for the terminally ill

By JOHN O'CONNOR

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Illinois residents with terminal illnesses may choose to end their lives on their own terms under a law Gov. JB Pritzker signed Friday.

The Medical Aid in Dying act takes effect in September 2026 to give the Illinois Department of Public Health and other medical participants time to develop "stringent processes and protections" for implementing the provision, according to the Democratic governor's office.

It is also known as "Deb's Law," honoring Deb Robertson, a lifelong resident of the state living with a rare terminal illness who has pushed for the measure's approval and testified to the suffering of people and their families wanting the chance to decide for themselves how and when their lives should end.

Pritzker said he has been moved by stories of patients suffering from terminal illness and their devotion to



Gov. JB Pritzker packs boxes of canned goods with members of his staff while volunteering Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025, at the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Associated Press

"freedom and choice at the end of life in the midst of personal heartbreak."

"This legislation will be thoughtfully implemented so that physicians can consult patients on making deeply personal decisions

with authority, autonomy, and empathy," Pritzker said after singing the measure in Chicago.

Eleven other states and the District of Columbia offer medical aid in dying, according to the advocacy

group, Death With Dignity. Delaware was the latest, and its provision takes effect Jan. 1, 2026. Seven other states are considering allowing it.

In Illinois, patients 18 and older with physician-con-

firmed mental capacity to make medical decisions may request end-of-life medication if they have an illness that could be fatal within six months, as verified by two doctors; as well as have received information about all end-of-life care options, such as hospice or palliative care. Additionally, both oral and written requests for the medication must come from the patient, not a surrogate or proxy.

Sponsoring Sen. Linda Holmes, a suburban Chicago Democrat, said both her parents died of cancer.

"I'll never forget the helpless feeling of watching them suffer when there was nothing I could do to help them," Holmes said. "Every adult patient of sound mind should have this as one more option in their end-of-life care in the event their suffering becomes unbearable."

The Illinois House approved the measure 63-42 in late May at the end of the legislative spring session. □

New Orleans jail escapee who evaded capture for months gets life sentence for double murder

By JACK BROOK

Associated Press/Report for America

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The last inmate caught after an audacious New Orleans jailbreak was sentenced Friday to two life sentences over a 2018 double murder, with the Louisiana judge rebuking him for the disruption caused by his five months on the run.

Derrick Groves, 28, wore shackles and an orange jumpsuit in a New Orleans courtroom, two months after investigators tracked him down and captured him beneath a house in Atlanta. Groves and nine other inmates escaped in May by crawling through a hole behind a jail toilet, leaving behind graffiti that read "To Easy LoL."

A jury last year convicted Groves of two counts of second-degree murder for killing Jamar Robinson and

Byron Jackson in a shooting at a Mardi Gras party in 2018. He also pleaded guilty last year to manslaughter in two fatal shootings in a separate case.

Groves' escape caused "concern, disappointment, frustration and displeasure" to the court, said Orleans

Parish Judge Dennis Waldron. The judge said the killings compounded tragedy already endured by Groves' family, noting that in 1994 a corrupt New Orleans police officer ordered the killing of his grandmother, Kim Groves, after she reported police misconduct.



Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams addresses the media following the sentencing of Derrick Groves, Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, in New Orleans.

Associated Press

"He chose to not honor the memory of his grandmother as she lay in that street in the Ninth ward, shot to death," Waldron said. "He made that conscious decision to go the other way and to kill, not once, not twice, not three times, but four times."

Kadija Jackson, the sister of one of the victims, said she sends photos of him to his daughter so the girl can show friends she once had a father. Jackson recalled finding her brother dying inside a car after Groves fired an AK-style rifle.

"He lifted his head, but deep down, I knew he wasn't going to make it," she said sobbing. "That moment shattered something inside me. Since that day my life has felt like it is missing a piece that it felt it could never replace."

As she spoke, Groves smirked and nodded from

the defense table, and later turned to stare at her and the other victims' supporters from across the courtroom.

Peter Freiberg, Groves' attorney, said his client maintains his innocence and plans to appeal his convictions, while expressing sympathy for the victims' families.

The judge, however, said Groves showed no remorse and the city would be far safer with him imprisoned for life. In addition to the two life sentences, Groves was convicted of two counts of attempted murder for wounding others in the 2018 shooting. Waldron imposed two 50-year sentences for those convictions, stacked onto the life terms. The judge also referenced video of Groves smiling and blowing kisses while being led away after his capture in Georgia. □

E.U. indefinitely freezes Russian assets so Hungary and Slovakia can't veto their use for Ukraine

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union on Friday indefinitely froze Russia's assets in Europe to ensure that Hungary and Slovakia, both with Moscow-friendly governments, can't prevent the billions of euros from being used to support Ukraine.

Using a special procedure meant for economic emergencies, the EU blocked the assets until Russia gives up its war on Ukraine and compensates its neighbor for the heavy damage that it has inflicted for almost four years.

EU Council President António Costa said European leaders had committed in October "to keep Russian assets immobilized until Russia ends its war of aggression against Ukraine and compensates for the damage caused. Today we delivered on that commitment."

It's a key step that will allow EU leaders to work out at a summit next week how to use the tens of billions of euros in Russian Central Bank assets to underwrite a



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen speaks during a media conference regarding Ukraine's financing needs for 2026-2027 at EU headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025.

huge loan to help Ukraine meet its financial and military needs over the next two years.

"Next step: securing Ukraine's financial needs for 2026-27," added Costa, who will chair the summit on Dec. 18.

The move also prevents the assets, estimated to total around 210 billion euros (\$247 billion), from being

used in any negotiations to end the war without European approval.

A 28-point plan drafted by U.S. and Russian envoys stipulated that the EU would release the frozen assets for use by Ukraine, Russia and the United States. That plan, which surfaced last month, was rejected by Ukraine and its backers in Europe.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest ally in Europe, accused the European Commission, which prepared the decision, "of systematically raping European law."

The vast majority of the funds around 193 billion euros (\$225 billion) at the end of September are held in Euroclear, a Belgian finan-

cial clearing house.

The money was frozen under sanctions that the EU imposed on Russia over the war it launched on Feb. 24, 2022, but these sanctions must be renewed every six months, and all 27 member countries must approve them for that to happen.

Hungary and Slovakia oppose providing more support to Ukraine.

Friday's decision, which is based on EU treaty rules allowing the bloc to protect its economic interests in certain emergency situations, prevents them from blocking the sanctions roll-over and make it easier to use the assets.

Orbán said on social media that it means that "the rule of law in the European Union comes to an end, and Europe's leaders are placing themselves above the rules."

"The European Commission is systematically raping European law. It is doing this in order to continue the war in Ukraine, a war that clearly isn't winnable," he wrote. He said that Hungary "will do everything in its power to restore a lawful order." □

Associated Press

Danish intelligence report warns of U.S. military threat under Trump

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — The United States is using its economic power to "assert its will" and threaten military force against friend and foe alike, a Danish intelligence agency said in a new report.

The Danish Defense Intelligence Service, in its latest annual assessment, said Washington's greater assertiveness under the Trump administration also comes as China and Russia seek to diminish Western, especially American, influence.

Perhaps most sensitive to Denmark a NATO and European Union member country, and a U.S. ally is growing competition between those great powers in the Arctic. U.S. Presi-

dent Donald Trump has expressed a desire to see Greenland, a semiautonomous and mineral-rich territory of Denmark, become part of the United States, a move opposed by Russia and much of Europe.

"The strategic importance of the Arctic is rising as the conflict between Russia and the West intensifies, and the growing security and strategic focus on the Arctic by the United States will further accelerate these developments," said the report, published Wednesday.

The assessment also follows the release last week of a new Trump administration national security strategy that depicts European allies as weak and aims to reassert America's

dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Russia is worried about NATO's activities in the Arctic and will respond by strengthening its military capability in the polar region.

The findings and analyses in the report echo a string of recent concerns, notably in Western Europe, about an increasingly go-it-alone approach by the United States, which under Trump's second term has favored bilateral deals and partnerships at the expense of multilateral alliances like NATO.

"For many countries outside the West, it has become a viable option to forge strategic agreements with China rather

than the United States," read the report, which was written in Danish. "China and Russia, together with other like-minded states, are seeking to reduce Western and particularly

US global influence."

"At the same time, uncertainty has grown over how the United States will prioritize its resources in the future," it added. □



Danish military forces participate in an exercise with hundreds of troops from several European NATO members in the Arctic Ocean in Nuuk, Greenland, Monday, Sept. 15, 2025.

Associated Press

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U.N. chief recommends Iraqi ex-President Barham Salih take over refugee agency, letter says



Iraq's President Barham Salih speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Baghdad, Iraq, Friday, March 29, 2019.

Associated Press

By JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has recommended former Iraqi President Barham Salih to become the next head of the U.N. refugee agency, the first nomination from the Middle East in half a century, according to a letter from the U.N. chief.

Salih, 65, is set to succeed longtime agency veteran Filippo Grandi as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Grandi took office on Jan. 1, 2016, and his second five-year term expires on Dec. 31. He succeeded Guterres in the post.

The expected succession comes at the end of a devastating year for many U.N. organizations like the Geneva-based refugee agency. It has cut thousands of jobs and spending in the wake of sharply reduced foreign aid contributions by the United States tradition-

ally its top donor and other Western countries.

Salih, a native of Iraq's Kurdistan region, served as Iraq's president from 2018 to 2022. He would be the first non-Western head of the Geneva-based refugee agency since Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan of Iran from 1966 to 1977.

A signed letter from Guterres, dated Thursday, about the selection was addressed to Ambassador Atsuyuki Oike, Japan's top diplomat in Geneva and chair of UNHCR's executive committee. The letter was widely circulated on social media and a copy was provided to The Associated Press on Friday.

Diplomatic officials in Geneva, speaking on condition of anonymity because the appointment had not been finalized, told the AP that the letter was authentic.

Alessandra Vellucci, chief spokesperson for the U.N.

office in Geneva, said that the appointment must go through "a proper process" that includes consultations with the committee, and a final decision will be taken by the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

"The process is ongoing. And once it's finished, there will be an official announcement made by the United Nations," she told reporters at a regular U.N. briefing.

Salih's presidential term came in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic State group's rampage across Iraq and the battle to take back the territory seized by the extremist group, including the key northern city of Mosul.

At least 2.2 million Iraqis were displaced as they fled the IS offensive. Many, particularly members of the Yazidi minority from the northern Sinjar district, remain in displacement camps today. □



Prime Minister Mark Carney reacts as Michael Ma, Member of Parliament for Markham-Unionville, who crossed the floor from the Conservatives to the Liberals hours earlier, makes brief remarks at the Liberal caucus holiday party in Ottawa, on Thursday, Dec. 11, 2025.

Associated Press

Canada's Liberals are one shy of a majority government after another Conservative defects

By ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's governing Liberals were one seat short of a simple majority in Parliament after a Conservative lawmaker defected and joined Prime Minister Mark Carney's party Thursday.

Michael Ma was the second Canadian Conservative opposition lawmaker to join the Liberals in just over a month. Ma, who represents Markham-Unionville, said he entered politics "to focus on solutions, not division."

"I have concluded that Prime Minister Mark Carney is offering the steady, practical approach we need to deliver on the priorities I hear every day while door knocking in Markham-Unionville," Ma said in his statement. His move puts the Liberals one seat shy of a majority government and being able to pass any bill without the support of an opposition party.

Carney joined hands and welcomed Ma at the Liberal Party Christmas party on Thursday night.

"Wow, such a big welcome," Ma said.

Carney noted his coalition of supporters is growing.

"You are going to have a much better time spending Christmas with us than Christmas with the Kranks. We are all about Santa, not about the Grinch," Carney joked.

The defection is a blow to Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, who is facing a leadership review vote in January. Poilievre lost the last election in April and even his own seat in Parliament, but has since rejoined the House of Commons. "Michael Ma was elected as a Conservative by the constituents of Markham-Unionville to fight against Liberal inflationary spending driving up the cost of living in his community," Poilievre said in a statement on social media. □

Sun catchers: The different lizards in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Colorful or camouflaged, you're bound to encounter a variety of lizards basking in the sun or scurrying on their way in our island. From the charming, friendly iguanas to the good-luck gecko Pega-Pega, you're bound to meet a few of these special residents during your visit.

Aruba, as a desert island, is home to an incredible variety of unique and colorful species. Among them we can find different lizards, most of which have South American origins. But there are a few exceptions.

Iguanas



Iguanas are easy to spot, as they are larger than most other lizards and when young, have a bright green color that makes them stand out.

The iguanas usually found in Aruba are the Iguana, known as the green iguana, or locally as Yuwana. The Yuwana are a mostly herbivorous species, and can grow up to 2 meters in size, including the tail, making them one of the largest in the iguana family. As you will see, despite their name, as they reach adulthood, the iguanas can take on a grey or blue tone instead of the bright green displayed by the young ones. In Aruba – as in the rest of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – the most usual color varies from green to lavender, black and sometimes a reddish brown.

Yuwana is a protected species, as it is listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), meaning that international trade is regulated through the CITES permit system. In the past, Arubans used to eat a popular Yuwana soup, as it was believed to give strength and help restore health – probably due to the protein boost it delivered. However, it is now illegal to catch, kill, buy or sell Yuwanas in Aruba, and this includes eating them!

Turnip-tailed gecko



The turnip-tailed gecko is known locally as the Pega-Pega, meaning sticky-sticky, due to the way it sticks to walls using the suction in its little fingers. They are found inside houses, and are mostly a nocturnal animal.

According to Etnia Nativa, the local Pega Pega is immediately recognizable by its large size, with a body length of up to 12 cm, and its large, swollen tail, approximately the same length or slightly

shorter than its body; females are larger and more robust than males. It has short, robust legs with flattened toes and extensive basal webbing.

The undersides of its toes are covered in lamellae, which are used as friction pads to cling to smooth vertical surfaces. Some can even walk around completely upside down. Its toes are covered with ridges, which are peppered with millions of microscopic bristle-like structures called setae that attach and detach when the animal wills them to, and they never get gunked up.

They are variable in coloration, from a mottled dark gray to orange-brown, and are capable of changing color depending on their mood and surroundings. Mottled and banded markings aid in camouflage against tree bark. They are harmless and fragile; you can hold one in your hands as long as you are VERY gentle.

Never put pressure on its tail because it will surely drop as a measure to try to distract the predator, and they are different from other lizards because they're long-lived, talkative, lack eyelids, and their small scales are situated next to each other like cobblestones rather than overlapping as is the case in most other lizards.

Turnip-tailed Geckos are insectivorous and feed on cockroaches, grasshoppers, beetles, flies, mosquitoes, and spiders, which makes them the best pest control to have at home! They spend their days concealed in dark tree grooves and cavities, in narrow crevices in the walls, or behind paintings, which provide the perfect shelter for them. Pega pega is a gecko endemic to our island, but in time, some 4–5 intrusive gecko species have been observed, some of which do not cease to amaze us with the racket they make, especially during the hours of the night.

The Pega-pega *Phyllodactylus Julieni* is also a protected species in Aruba, by law. It is illegal to kill them!

Blue Cododo

These are one of the most striking lizards in Aruba, recognizable by the male's bright blue color. The Aruban whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus arubensis*, is a species endemic to Aruba, meaning you can only find it here on our One Happy Island! They are also recognized as the most common and populous lizard on the island. While the male is



blue with white dots, the female is brown with blue dots.

These charming lizards eat mostly plants, such as flowers, nectar, leaves and fruits, and occasionally enjoy some insects. They are selective in which plants they eat, because of the toxins present in many available plants species. The Cododo help take care of Aruba's vegetation by playing a significant role in the dispersal of seeds for certain plants: when they eat fruit, they excrete the seeds in diverse locations, contributing to the reproduction cycle of our local plants.

Striped anole

The striped anole (*Anolis lineatus*) that lives in Aruba is known locally as Waltaka or Toteki. This is a species of lizard in the family Dactyloidae, and they are native to Aruba and Curaçao. It is usually found in dry areas, commonly where there are not large trees; rather they enjoy rocks, walls or tree trunks, as they prefer to stay close to the ground.

These lizards are about 7cm in length, have a brown color with a stripe on each side and typically, several stripes on the body and tail that are lighter in color. It has a dewlap which is orange-yellow – and what's unique about this species is that it is the only known species of anole where the dewlap is asymmetrically colored, with one side being a deeper orange and the other side a lighter yellow. Mostly this is seen in the males, as it is almost imperceptible in the females. If the Toteki shows you his dewlap, retreat! This is not a friendly greeting!

Lizards are wonderful creatures that are precious to our fragile, local ecosystem. Please be mindful of these residents as you enjoy your stay. □

Images: Some images are from Aruba Birdlife Conservation.



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Beaches for the whole family to enjoy!

(Oranjestad)—One of the biggest concerns that parents have when traveling with their children is a guarantee of their safety and healthy enjoyment. Therefore, we thought it would be a great help to traveling parents to list off some the most family-friendly beaches around the island.

Baby Beach in San Nicolas

Baby Beach is one Aruba's most popular and visited beaches, and for good reason: This sandy and quiet lagoon is a great place for parents to sit back and relax while their children play in the shallow shores of the beach. Beside the relaxing atmosphere, there are also several services that may accommodate your stay, like a parking lot, sun tent rentals, chairs, bathrooms and a snack bar right at the far left of the beach.



Mangel Halto in Pos Chiquito

Mangel Halto is situated in the back streets of Pos Chiquito. Though there are several stairs on the sides of the beach cliff leading you down, the best spot for families to hang out is

across the bridge, passed the mangrove trees near the entrance sign. Here, there are small and big palapas, perfect for big and small families to set up their belongings. In this area, the shore is also shallow, falling right around

your knee before slowly getting deeper: perfect for kids to safely play.

Eagle Beach/Palm Beach

Yet another highly popular beach sites, Eagle Beach and Palm Beach is where

most of our visitors go to tan, swim or play in the white sand. Because they are near the low-rise and high-rise hotel areas, these beaches are the most accessible for visitors on foot. These beaches also offer many palapas free to use, but you can also rent chairs and tents. Much like Baby Beach, these sites are one of the best beaches for your children to play and build sand castles.

Boca Catalina in Malmok

Boca Catalina is a small bay beach near the Malmok beach area further down the hotel areas. Though it may not be a very sandy beach, it is relatively quiet and tranquil. This is a great place for family to lay down a big blanket and have a little picnic. This is also one of the best places to snorkel, as this area is filled with little fish and corals, even close to the shore. □



"Aruba to me is home away from home"

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names,

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Beth Marcis.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is home away from home. Everybody here makes you feel like we are family." Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to find the anchor?

The anchor is a “must see” landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when you're visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean Sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the “T” junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the “fluke” or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the anchor come from?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately

the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

“According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain.”

Story 2:

“Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them.”

How did the anchor become a landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbor-master of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr., local businessman. Charlie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The “anchor”, which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated “To All Seamen” on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

Through the years

Through the years the Anchor was slowly weathering from the wind and salt. As time passed, sadly the origin and purpose of the anchor slowly faded away from people's memories.

After Charles Brouns Jr. died on September 15, 2004, his friend Mr. Sam Speziale, re-

quested assistance from the management of Valero Aruba Refinery to help maintain the monument. The Valero Aruba Refinery graciously sandblasted and painted the anchor and poured a concrete pad around it. On April 17, 2005, the anchor monument was rededicated “To All Seamen” in a formal ceremony in memory of Charles Brouns Jr.

Today, the anchor stands both as memorial to all seaman who have lost their lives at sea, but also as a silent reminder that Seroe Colorado is part of San Nicolas and that San Nicolas is still a vibrant and important part of the island of Aruba.

The best time to visit

When you're planning your visit to the south end of the



island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule. □

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Visit the natural bridges of Aruba!



(Oranjestad)—After you've visited the Alto Vista Church, the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and the mini natural pool that is located right next to it, you're next up around the northern coast line must be the Natural Bridge. Once the largest natural bridge in the Caribbean, this bridge has been a tourist attraction for many years.

The bridge was formed during thousands of years, cut and crafted by the wild waves that crash into the coral stone walls of the coast. Before its collapse, this bridge measured 30 meters in length and 7 meters in height, making it the biggest natural bridge in the Caribbean at the time. For many years, this site was also a frequently visited beach, as the bridge had a small opening through which the water would flow into the tiny beach.

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand con-



fiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that you have to pay before leaving. This would surely not be a pleasant experience. Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! □

Unfortunately in 2005, the bridge collapsed, and the little beach dried up. Despite this, this site remained a tourist attraction, with many visitors walking along the coral cliffs of the bridge to see the spectacular view of the northern coastline and the Caribbean Sea. Visitors can also

still visit the souvenir shop on the left of the bridge entrance.

While the natural bridge no longer is functional, there is now a smaller natural bridge very close. This bridge is often called the "Baby Bridge" or "Daughter Bridge". □



Fun facts about the 'Lisinbein'

The 'Lisinbein' (*Scolopendra gigantea*), also known as the Giant Centipede, is one of the largest centipedes in the world and is found in Aruba. Its size and hunting prowess make it a fascinating, if often misunderstood, creature.

Despite its fearsome reputation, it plays a crucial ecological role that often goes unnoticed.

As an apex invertebrate predator, *Scolopendra gigantea* helps maintain balance in the ecosystem. Moreover, they themselves are a food source for birds such as the Crested Caracara (Warawara) and the Aruba burrowing owl (Shoco).

It controls populations of smaller invertebrates and even small vertebrates, ensuring that no species overpopulates, which could disrupt local biodiversity.

Its presence can indicate a healthy, functioning ecosystem. Its sensitivity to environmental changes makes it a bioindicator of ecological balance.

It can reach an impressive length of up to 30 centimeters (approx. 12 inches) and live for around 5 to 10 years in the wild. Its size and longevity makes it a significant and long-term part of the ecosystem.

A mother's love

In *Scolopendra* species, the 'mother' typically exhibits maternal care by curling around her eggs and newly hatched young. She stays coiled around the clutch, protecting it from predators and fungi, which are serious risks in the moist environments these centipedes often



inhabit. The mother maintains a clean environment for the eggs by carefully grooming them, which helps prevent fungal growth that could endanger the brood. This behavior may continue until the young centipedes have undergone their first molt, making them more capable of independent survival.

This form of parental care is beneficial in increasing the survival rates of offspring, as the mother's protection provides a safe 'environment' during their vulnerable developmental stages. It's a fascinating adaptation because it shows a form of care that resembles more complex behaviors observed in vertebrates.

No bark, but all bite!

The lisinbein is known locally for having a really painful sting. While venomous, the Lisinbein is generally not aggressive toward humans unless provoked. Its role as a guardian of balance in the ecosystem helps protect the natural beauty of Aruba by keeping the ecosystem in harmony.

Editor's note: Information and pictures provided by Ms. Natasha Silva from the Aruba Conservation Foundation. □

Meet Aruba's biggest hero, Boy Ecury

(Oranjestad)—As part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and due to its strategic geolocation, Aruba was unexpectedly involved in the Second World War. As is known around the globe, this chapter in world history is one of the most tragic yet, and many soldiers and rebels have died on the front line during this time.

One of those rebels who have fought against the Nazi regime, was an Aruban named Segundo Jorge Adelberto "Boy" Ecury. Born in Aruba on April 23rd, 1922, Boy spent his childhood on the island, before being sent to The Netherlands by his father when he was 15 years old to continue his studies abroad. This was in 1937, three years before WWII broke out. During the war, he actively participated in the rebellion in The Netherlands against the Nazi regime, but his rebellious streak and constant drive to fight for justice began even before the war broke out. Being a person of color with a Haitian heritage living in The Netherlands made him vulnerable to discrimination, and this inspired him to be an activist, to stand up and fight against discrimination and oppression.

After seeing the horrific bomb-



ings of Rotterdam first-hand, he decided to join the resistance. At the same time, he was still studying and living with family in Tilburg. It was there where he met people who printed and distributed the rebellion newspaper. This would be the first of three rebellion group that he would join throughout his 4-year service to the resistance. Boy's primary task as member of the group was to distract the German soldiers while others ran into hiding into alleyways. This he was able to do because of his skin color and confronting demeanor. Boy also participated in the multiple sabotaging operations against the German military occupying The Netherlands. These included bombings on German military

trucks and trains. The group also helped people go into hiding, as well as opened fire against allies of the Nazi regime. In these operations, Boy really stood out for his cold bloodedness.

In 1943, he received a notice to be placed for work in Germany. This he refused, of course, and went into hiding using multiple addresses in multiple cities. Because he was a wanted man, he of course could not continue to be active as a rebel. However, stubborn and naturally rebellious as he was, he always tried to join in on the operations regardless.

In 1944, after his friend Luis de Lanoy, a fellow rebel from Curacao, was arrested and executed, he moved to Delft, where he joined his third and last group in Rotterdam. During this time, he wrote a goodbye letter for his family, possibly knowing the risks of him being active again in the big cities.

Eventually, he proved himself right. On November 5th, 1944, Boy Ecury was arrested by German soldiers. He was placed in the "Oranje-hotel" prison in Scheveningen, The Hague, where he was questioned. Despite being sold out by an acquaintance, he himself never gave



away the names of his comrades. Famously, he told his cell mate: "I will die with a smile on my face." On November 6th, 1944, Ecury was executed. He was only 22 years old.

Ecury was buried with military honor. In 1949, the Aruban Government erected a monumental bust of him in front of what is now the linear park trail, and in 1984 he received the Resistance Memorial Cross postmortem.

Boy's life motto was this: "In my father's house, there is no place for a traitor." □

Source: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the

gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assign-

ment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.



Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to

obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □

Sources: Etnia Nativa



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 46 Quite
- 1 Lot unit
- 5 Shiny finish
- 10 Hitching tool
- 12 Sold for
- 13 Slow tempo
- 14 Fighting words
- 15 "Exodus" hero
- 16 England's Churchill
- 18 Cold time
- 20 Galoot
- 21 Inkling
- 23 Obtain
- 24 Source of cents
- 26 Call for
- 28 La Brea stuff
- 29 Painter Dix
- 31 Musician Yoko
- 32 Target for Jack Frost
- 36 Painter Homer
- 39 Skating surface
- 40 Gladden
- 41 Island greeting
- 43 Type a password, perhaps
- 44 Contract add-on
- 45 Cleaned, in a way

DOWN

- 1 Attorney follower
- 2 Dear, in Dijon
- 3 Quarrel
- 4 CPR pro
- 5 Amused look
- 6 Back muscles
- 7 Facing the audience
- 8 Bent over
- 9 Bard's work
- 11 Greeted deferentially
- 17 Hot blood
- 19 Pewter component
- 22 Dove's stance
- 24 "Mandy" singer
- 25 It began about 1000 B.C.
- 27 Long, long time
- 28 Locker room
- 30 Tango need
- 33 Radio part
- 34 Earthy color
- 35 Tired
- 37 Word on an octagon
- 38 Given for a time
- 42 Tyler of "Armageddon"

A	L	A	S	K	A		A	S	I	F		
L	E	N	T	I	L				U	N	D	O
P	O	T	A	T	O			P	O	O	R	
			S	E	E	S	A	W				
F	I	S	H				T	I	B	E	T	
A	N	N		S	W	O	R	E	B	Y		
U	N	O		T	A	R			L	O	P	
N	E	W	Y	O	R	K			L	O	O	
A	R	B	O	R			A	S	K	S		
		A	D	M	I	T	S					
A	X	L	E		B	A	T	A	A	N		
T	I	L	L		I	C	I	C	L	E		
M	I	S	S		S	O	R	T	E	D		

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	
10				11		12				
13						14				
15				16	17					
18			19					20		
			21			22		23		
	24	25				26	27			
28				29	30					
31					32			33	34	35
36			37	38				39		
40						41	42			
43						44				
45							46			

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-21

CRYPTOQUOTE

QOG SLZW NDSAQ J'X LSQ
JLQGAGNQQGF JL JN OSANG
AYVJLM. QOYQ'N PGVYBNG J
FSL'Q RLSH QOG OSANGN
DGANSLYZZW. — LYQ RJLM
VSZG

Cryptoquote: SNOWFLAKES
ARE PRETTY PATTERNS ETCHED IN WATER'S
DREAMS. — ANTHONY T. HINCKS

Cruise ship Schedule: Dec. 12 - 18 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
FRI	12	CRYSTAL SERENITY NORWEGIAN PEARL	08.00 08.00	18.00 20.00	B C	1 1
SUN	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS CARIBBEAN PRINCESS FREEWINDS - Dept.	07.00 09.00 ****	16.00 22.00 22.30	B C E	1 1 -
TUE	16	NORWEGIAN EPIC MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00 08.00	17.00 20.00	B C	1 1
WED	17	SILVER SHADOW SERENADE OF THE SEAS OASIS OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	08.00 08.00 07.00 06.00	14.00 23.00 16.00 ****	B C I E	1 1 1 1
THU	18	CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE VOLENDAM AIDASOL	08.00 08.00 08.00	20.00 17.00 18.00	C B I	1 1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

			2	1				9
	2					8		
	1			4	9	2		
9	4			7				5
		7			8			4
3			1	5	4			7
	6		5			9		
		8	7			4	6	

Difficulty: ★★★★★

12/13

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	6	7	3	1	5	8	2
3	2	5	6	8	4	1	9	7
7	8	1	9	2	5	3	6	4
4	3	8	5	1	9	2	7	6
1	6	9	2	7	8	4	3	5
2	5	7	4	6	3	9	1	8
6	1	4	3	5	7	8	2	9
8	9	2	1	4	6	7	5	3
5	7	3	8	9	2	6	4	1

Difficulty: ★★★

12/12

Winter virus season so far is not too bad, but doctors worry about suffering to come

By MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It may feel like you are surrounded by sniffles and coughs, but flu season activity is still low in many parts of the U.S.

New government data posted Friday shows that as of last week, flu activity was high in four states: Colorado, Louisiana, New Jersey and New York and minimal or low in most others. Severity indicators are increasing but are still within the boundaries of a "mild" season, said officials at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A number of diseases tend to peak in the winter, thanks to indoor gatherings that help germs spread. The list includes not only colds and flu but also norovirus, a highly infectious cause of vomiting and diarrhea. Norovirus cases have generally been trending up in the last month.

Here are three seasonal respiratory viruses that experts are keeping an eye on:

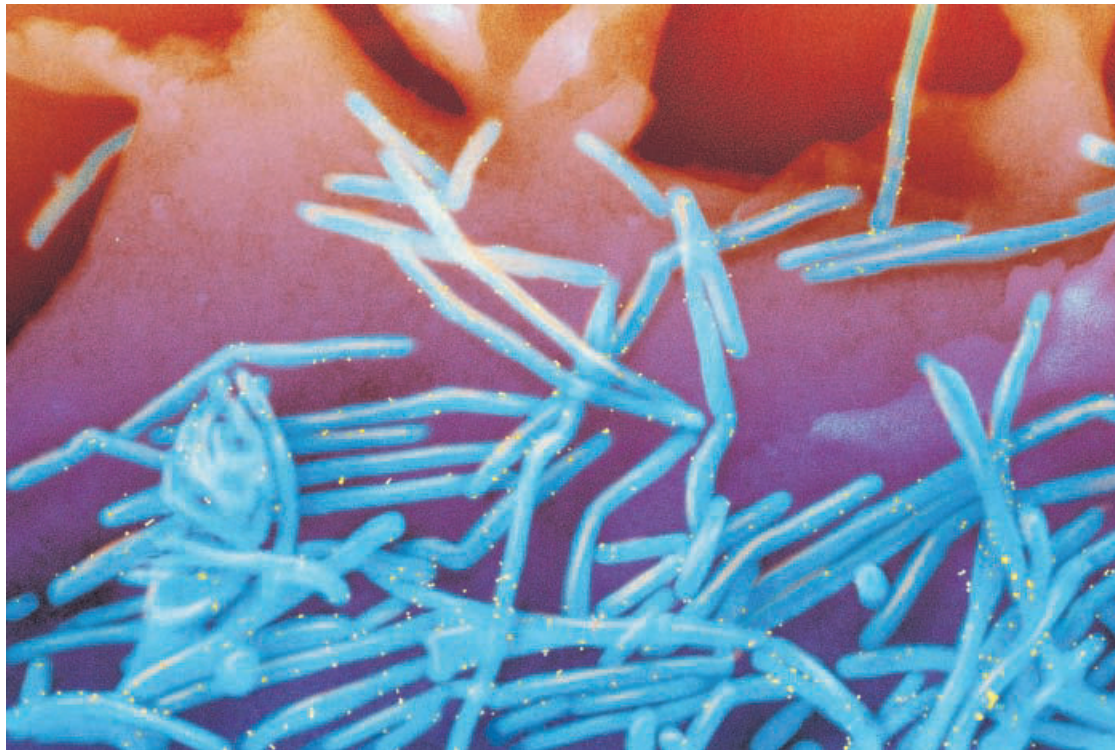
Experts are closely watching flu

Last flu season was bad, with the overall flu hospitalization rate the highest since the H1N1 flu pandemic 15 years ago. With the addition of a late-reported case, child flu deaths reached 288, the worst recorded for regular U.S. flu season and the same number seen in the 2009-2010 flu pandemic.

This season's first pediatric flu death was reported this week.

There are reasons to fear this winter might be bad.

One type of flu virus called A H3N2 historically has caused the most hospitalizations and deaths in older people. So far this season, that's the type most frequently reported. Even more concerning, 89% of the H3N2 infections analyzed were a new version known as the subclade K variant that differs from the strain in this year's flu shots.



This electron microscope image provided by the National Institutes of Health shows human respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) virions, colored blue, and anti-RSV F protein/gold antibodies, colored yellow, shedding from the surface of human lung cells.

Associated Press

Flu seasons often don't peak until around February, so it's too early to know how big a problem that mismatch will be.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get an annual vaccination, and public health experts say it's not too late. About 42% of U.S. adults and 41% of children have gotten flu shots this season, according to CDC data.

The shots may not prevent all symptoms but they can prevent many infections from becoming severe. That appears to be true for

this year's shot, according to a preliminary U.K. analysis.

RSV usually peaks soon. Respiratory syncytial virus is a common cause of cold-like symptoms. But it can be dangerous for infants and the elderly, and is known for filling hospitals with wheezing babies every fall and winter.

RSV seasons typically peak by December or January, but the season seems to be starting later than usual reported cases so far have been relatively low, according to the CDC.

It's likely more RSV is com-

ing, said Dr. Cameron Wolfe, an infectious diseases expert at Duke University, in an email. □



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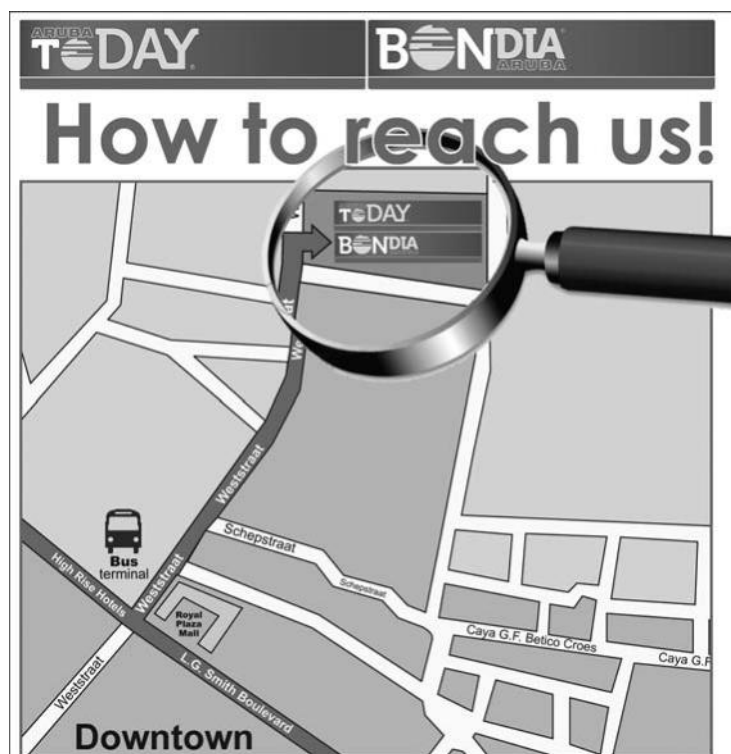
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Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Eagle: Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850

Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

This holiday season isn't very merry for consumers, an AP-NORC poll finds

By JOSH BOAK and AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This holiday season isn't quite so merry for American shoppers as large shares are dipping into savings, scouring for bargains and feeling like the overall economy is stuck in a rut under President Donald Trump, a new AP-NORC poll finds. The vast majority of U.S. adults say they've noticed higher than usual prices for groceries, electricity and holiday gifts in recent months, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Roughly half of Americans say it's harder than usual to afford the things they want to give as holiday gifts, and similar numbers are delaying big purchases or cutting back on nonessential purchases more than they would normally.

It's a sobering assessment for the Republican president, who returned to the White House in large part by promising to lower prices, only to find that inflation remains a threat to his popularity just as it did for Democrat Joe Biden's presidency. The poll's findings look very similar to an AP-NORC poll from December 2022, when Biden was president and the country was grap-



A Utah Food Bank volunteer carries groceries at a mobile food pantry distribution site Dec. 21, 2022, in Salt Lake City.

pling with higher rates of inflation. Trump's series of tariffs have added to inflationary pressures and generated anxiety about the stability of the U.S. economy, keeping prices at levels that many Americans find frustrating.

The president has insisted there is "no" inflation and the U.S. economy is booming, as he expressed frustration that the public feels differently.

"When will people understand what is happening?" Trump said Thursday on Truth Social. "When will Polls reflect the Greatness of America at this point in

time, and how bad it was just one year ago?"

Most U.S. adults, 68%, continue to say the country's economy is "poor," which is unchanged from December 2024, before Trump returned to the presidency. Americans are feeling strained as they continue to see high prices

White House officials plan to send Trump barnstorming across the country in hopes of bucking up people's faith in the economy before next year's midterm elections. But the president this week in Pennsylvania defended the price increases tied to his tariffs

by suggesting that Americans should buy fewer dolls and pencils for children. His message is a jarring contrast with what respondents expressed in the poll, even among people who backed him in the 2024 election.

Sergio Ruiz, 44, of Tucson, Arizona, said he is using more buy now, pay later programs to spread out over time the expense of gifts for his children. He doesn't put a huge emphasis on politics, but he voted for Trump last year and would like to see lower interest rates to help boost his real estate business. He believes that

more Americans having higher incomes would help to manage any affordability issues.

"Prices are up. What can you do? You need to make more money," Ruiz said.

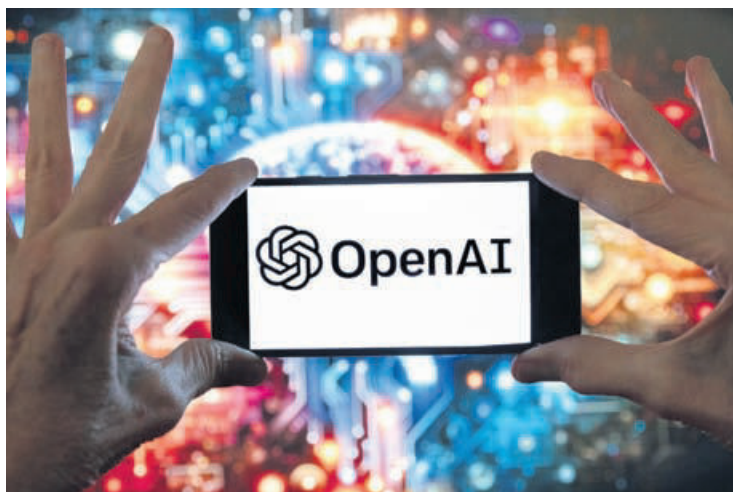
The poll found that when they do shop, about half of Americans are finding the lowest price more than they would normally. About 4 in 10 are dipping into their savings more than at other times.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they're cutting back on expenses or looking for low prices, but many Republicans are budgeting more than usual as well. About 4 in 10 Republicans are looking for low prices more than they usually would, while a similar share are shopping for nonessential items less than usual.

Views are largely similar to when Biden was president. People felt similarly dismal about holiday shopping and the economy when Biden was president in 2022. Inflation had spiked to a four-decade high that summer. Three years later, inflation has eased substantially, but it's still running at 3%, a full percentage point above the Federal Reserve's target as the job market appears to have entered a deep freeze. □

Associated Press

OpenAI names Slack CEO Dresser as first chief of revenue as ChatGPT maker aims to make a profit



The OpenAI logo is seen displayed on a cell phone in front of an image on a computer screen generated by ChatGPT's Dall-E text-to-image model, Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, in Boston.

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — OpenAI said Tuesday it has picked Slack CEO Denise Dresser as its first chief of revenue, a message to wary investors that the ChatGPT maker is serious about making a profit from its artificial intelligence technology.

OpenAI said Dresser will oversee global revenue strategy and "help more businesses put AI to work in their day-to-day operations."

Dresser had already spent more than a decade at Salesforce when the software pioneer announced in 2020 it was buying work-chatting service Slack for \$27.7 billion. She helped integrate Slack into the software company before Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff picked her as CEO in 2023.

Salesforce said in a statement that it was "grateful for Denise's leadership during

her 14 years at Salesforce." Rob Seaman, Slack's chief product officer, will take over her responsibilities on an interim basis.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman earlier this month set off a "code red" alert in an internal email to employees to improve its flagship product, ChatGPT, and delay other product developments.

OpenAI first released ChatGPT just over three years ago, sparking global fascination and a commercial boom in generative AI technology and giving the San Francisco-based startup an early lead. But the company faces increased competition with rivals, including Google, which last month unleashed Gemini 3, the latest version of its own AI assistant.

Altman has said ChatGPT now has more than 800 million weekly users. □

Remarkable Lindsey Vonn wins World Cup downhill at age 41 to start her Olympic season

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR**
AP Sports Writer

The queen of downhill skiing is well and truly back. At age 41, Lindsey Vonn is still faster than the rest and on Friday became the oldest winner of a World Cup race since the circuit started in 1967.

Vonn raced to a stunningly fast win in a downhill at St. Moritz on Friday to earn her first victory in nearly eight years and the first in her comeback with titanium implants in her right knee after a five-year retirement. The United States ski great seized the lead by an astonishing 1.16 seconds ahead of Mirjam Puchner of Austria. Even wilder was that Vonn trailed by 0.61 after the first two time checks at the Swiss resort.

Vonn's lead was later cut to 0.98 still a massive margin in downhill when unheralded Magdalena Egger took second place from teammate Puchner.

"It was an amazing day, I couldn't be happier, pretty emotional," Vonn told Swiss broadcaster RTS. "I felt good this summer but I wasn't sure how fast I was. I guess I know now how fast I am." Soon after, Vonn shed tears on the podium in the finish area when The Star-Spangled Banner played. It was a perfect start to her



United States' Lindsey Vonn speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill in St. Moritz, Switzerland, Friday Dec. 12, 2025.

Olympic season to get a first victory since a downhill in March 2018 at Are, Sweden.

Vonn's superb debut working with new coach Aksel Lund Svindal, a men's downhill great who won the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics title, suggests their stellar partnership is paying off. Her run Friday looked routine when she dropped tenths of seconds to Puchner's time on the top half of the sunbathed Corviglia course, where the finish is at altitude above 2,000 meters (6,500 feet).

Vonn then was faster than anyone through the next speed checks, touching 119 kph (74 mph), and posted the fastest time splits for the bottom half.

She skied through the finish area and bumped against the inflated safety barrier, lay down in the snow and raised her arms on seeing her time.

Night, night

Vonn got up, punched the air with her right fist and shrieked with joy before putting her hands to her left cheek in the style of Steph Curry's "Night, night" gesture.

ture.

The 2010 Olympic champion is targeting another gold medal at the Milan Cortina Winter Games in February. Women's Alpine skiing is at the storied Cortina d'Ampezzo course in the Dolomites, which Vonn has mastered in her career with 12 World Cup race wins.

"Obviously my goal is Cortina but if this is the way we start I think I'm in a good spot," said Vonn, who will be favored for another downhill win Saturday at St. Moritz.

Age records

Vonn has shredded age records since her return to World Cup racing at St. Moritz one year ago.

She's now the oldest winner of a men's or women's race, taking the mark set by 37-year-old Didier Cuche, also in Switzerland, in 2012 when he triumphed in a super-G at Crans-Montana. Until Friday, the women's record was 34 years, 7 months set by Federica Brignone in March after victory in a super-G at Kvitfjell, Norway.

No woman aged at least 35 ever was on a World Cup race podium until March when Vonn placed second in a super-G at Sun Valley. No women aged at least 36 ever had a points-scoring result in downhill until Vonn last season. No women aged at least 37 ever had a points-scoring result in any World Cup event until Vonn, according to the ski-db.com archive.

Vonn, who turns 42 in October, has pledged to retire at the end of the season in March, so might not catch the men's age record for a podium finish Johan Clarey was 42 years, 13 days when runner-up in the feared Kitzbühel downhill in January 2023. At 41, he also took silver in downhill at the 2022 Beijing Olympics. □

Associated Press

Owing more between \$10M and \$50M, Grand Slam Track files for bankruptcy; Johnson vows to press on

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
AP National Writer

Grand Slam Track, the league fronted by sprint great Michael Johnson that offered six-figure prize money for top runners, has filed for bankruptcy after canceling its final event and failing to pay athletes and vendors.

Johnson boasted a \$30 million bankroll at the outset, but in its Chapter 11 filing Thursday in Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, the league said it had less than \$50,000 cash on hand, between 200 and 999 creditors and owes between \$10 million and \$50 million. It marks the latest chapter in a stunning fall for a league that signed some of the sport's biggest stars including world champions Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, Anna Hall and Melissa Jefferson-Wooden

with a vision of reimagining the sport and keeping it on TV and in the headlines in non-Olympic years.

The Athletic reported in October that many of the top athletes were still owed six-figure sums, while vendors had largely rejected an offer from the league to accept an offer of 50% of what was owed to them or risk the league going into bankruptcy.

In a news release announcing the bankruptcy filing, Johnson said: "I refuse to give up on the mission of Grand Slam Track and the future we are building together." The league's troubles came into sharp focus in June when it canceled its meet in Los Angeles, the last of four scheduled events it set up for its opening season. □



Former U.S. sprinter Michael Johnson arrives at the Laureus Sports Awards ceremony in Madrid, Monday, April 22, 2024.

Associated Press

12 teams, 11 games, one champion: A guide to the College Football Playoff

By The Associated Press

The 12-team College Football Playoff bracket is set, and the games begin on Dec. 19. The first round is hosted by the higher seed before the games shift to neutral sites.

Here is you need to know: Who is playing and what time are the games?

11 games are set between Dec. 19 and Jan. 19, and each will be broadcast nationally. The first round (CFP seeds, times Eastern):

No. 9 Alabama at No. 8 Oklahoma, Dec. 19, 8 p.m. (ABC, ESPN)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Oklahoma by 1.5.

What to know: The CFP kicks off with an SEC rematch: The Sooners got the best of Alabama with a 23-21 road win in mid-November. Oklahoma's defense led the charge, helping OU score 17 points off three turnovers, one of which was an 87-yard pick-six. Alabama comes off a lackluster SEC title game loss to Georgia. Quarterback Ty Simpson and Alabama's offense will look for redemption against one of the nation's top defenses while Oklahoma's John Mateer will try to continue his storybook season.

The winner: Advances to



Indiana's Louis Moore tries to stop Ohio State's Bo Jackson during the second half of the Big Ten championship NCAA college football game in Indianapolis, Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025.

Associated Press

the Rose Bowl to play No. 1 Indiana.

No. 10 Miami (Fla.) at No. 7 Texas A&M, Dec. 20, Noon (ABC, ESPN)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Texas A&M by 3.5.

What to know: Texas A&M and Miami meet for the sixth time overall and first time in two years.

The Aggies and Hurricanes were the only teams to knock off Notre Dame this year, which played a major factor in Miami earning a CFP bid and the Irish be-

ing left out. The Hurricanes stumbled with a pair of bad conference losses but bounced back with four straight wins to end the season. Texas A&M had a perfect season up until the very last week, when they lost 27-17 to in-state foe Texas.

The winner: Advances to the Cotton Bowl to play No. 2 Ohio State.

No. 11 Tulane at No. 6 Ole Miss, Dec. 20, 3:30 p.m. (TNT, HBO Max)

BetMGM College Football

Odds: Ole Miss by 17.5.

What to know: Tulane punched its playoff ticket with a 34-21 American Conference championship win against North Texas. The Green Wave heads to Oxford to face Ole Miss for the second time this season. The two last met in September, and Ole Miss cruised to a 45-10 victory. The Rebels will be without head coach Lane Kiffin, whose request to lead the team before he leaves for LSU was turned down.

The winner: Advances to the Sugar Bowl to play No. 3 Georgia.

No. 12 James Madison at No. 5 Oregon, Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. (TNT, HBO Max)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Oregon by 21.5.

What to know: James Madison's trip to the CFP accounts for several firsts. It marks the Dukes' first time in the playoff, it will be the first time James Madison and Oregon meet in football and JMU made history with Tulane as the CFP has two Group of Five teams for the first time.

The Dukes were crowned Sun Belt champions with a 31-14 win against Troy, finishing the season with a 12-1 record. Oregon finished third in the Big Ten with an 11-1 record. The Ducks' only loss of the season was to Indiana in October.

The winner: Advances to the Orange Bowl to play No. 4 Texas Tech.

Who are the favorites?

Ohio State is the betting favorite with plus-225 odds (9-4) to win the national championship for the second straight year, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Indiana (+275, or 11-4) and Georgia (+500, 5-1) are next. □

Inspired by Philip Rivers, Jets coach Aaron Glenn jokes about making a comeback at 53

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr.
AP Pro Football Writer
FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)

— Aaron Glenn is ready to call it a comeback, too. OK, not really.



New York Jets head coach Aaron Glenn speaks to an official during the second half of an NFL football game against the Atlanta Falcons, Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

But the New York Jets coach, who last played in the NFL in 2008, was inspired by quarterback Philip Rivers coming out of retirement to sign this week and possibly start Sunday for Indianapolis at Seattle. Glenn kicked off his news conference Friday before going through the Jets' injury list by jokingly revealing his plan to play in New York's final two games this season against New England and Buffalo.

"I think it's a huge announcement that you guys should hear," Glenn said, keeping a straight face. "At 53 years old, I'll be making a comeback.

And I'll be getting ready to play in a couple of weeks against (Stefon) Diggs and against (Khalil) Shakir in Buffalo."

Glenn started laughing as he finished, providing a bit of levity as the Jets (3-10) prepare to face the heavily favored Jaguars (9-4) in Jacksonville on Sunday. A reporter then pointed out that in 2008, Glenn actually played against Rivers in Week 8 of that season, when Glenn was with the Saints and Rivers was the Chargers' starting quarterback.

"Yeah, I did," a smiling Glenn said. "That, I think, is outstanding."

The Saints won that game, by the way, 37-32 and Glenn had three tackles while Rivers had three touchdown passes and an interception.

Glenn was a three-time Pro Bowl selection at cornerback during a 15-year NFL career that began when he was drafted by New York with the 12th overall pick in 1994. He played eight seasons with the Jets before later having stints with Houston, Dallas, Jacksonville and New Orleans. Glenn was hired by the Jets as their coach in January after serving as Detroit's defensive coordinator the previous four seasons. □